



GENERAL ACTIVITY UPDATE

April 2007 – Issue 2

DOLE FOODS LOOKS TO SUPPORT AFGHANISTAN AGRICULTURE

Mr. David Murdock, owner and CEO of Dole Food Company, met with President Karzai on April 23rd to announce his intention to explore a major Dole presence in Afghanistan. Mr. Murdock, accompanied by USAID's Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator Mark Ward, came to Afghanistan at the request of President Bush and visited Bagram and Mazar-e-Sharif, as well as a U.S.-sponsored Agricultural Fair, the first of its kind held in many years in the country.

Dole Food Company, Inc., with 2006 revenues of \$6.2 billion, is the world's largest producer and marketer of high-quality fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers. Dole markets a growing line of packaged foods and frozen fruit and is a produce industry leader in nutrition education and research. Dole does business in more than 90 countries and employs some 36,000 full-time, regular employees and 23,000 full-time seasonal or temporary employees, worldwide.



Photo: USAID/Idrees Ilham

Visitors enjoy the exhibits at AgFair 2007 in Kabul.

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2,800 hectares of fruit orchards rehabilitated
- Afghan fruit and produce exported to Dubai, India, Pakistan and the Ukraine
- Over \$32 million paid in cash-for-work salaries to rebuild vital rural infrastructure
- Nearly 6,800 km of irrigation and drainage structures rehabilitated, improving irrigation for more than 235,000 hectares of farmland
- Over 800,000 farmers in eastern, southern and northern Afghanistan have received seed and fertilizer
- Over 100,000 farmers trained in improved agricultural techniques
- Over 4,800 given business skills training

FIRST EVER AG FAIR IN KABUL

AgFair 2007, the first international agricultural trade show of its kind in post-war Afghanistan, attracted between 45 and 60 thousand visitors over two days in April. The fair catalyzed much-needed investment in the agriculture sector, facilitated trade, and introduced new agricultural technologies for sale to Afghanistan.

"I haven't seen a fair like this before. I feel happy as I walk and see Afghan products. Next time, I will rent a booth myself."

- Mohammad Ismail, wood seller, Kabul

More than 200 local and international agricultural exhibitors participated at this year's AgFair, including farm equipment manufacturers, veterinary and animal health care businesses, food safety equipment manufacturers, and fruit and vegetable processors. An informal sample of 30 exhibitors revealed that their participation in AgFair will result in an average of \$90,000 in new business per year per booth-holder.

AgFair 2007 had a great impact upon national consciousness beyond the simple economic impetus it provided to the agriculture sector. An event of this scale and scope had not been attempted in Afghanistan for over 30 years, and it was completed without any security incidents.



GENERAL UPDATE (continued)

APRIL 2007

FIRST PRIVATE RADIO STATION OPENS IN PANJSHIR PROVINCE

The first-ever private radio station in Panjshir was formally inaugurated in early May. In the initial stage, listeners in the districts of Rokha and Bazarak will receive transmissions of the newly-inaugurated radio station.

Rohullah, director of the radio station, announced that the four hour broadcasting would consist of news bulletins, music and community programs. Speaking on the occasion, USAID representative Alexious Butler said they would also expand transmission to other districts of the province. Source: Pajhwok Afghan News, Afghanistan Times

Provincial Reconstruction Team News

SCHOOL DESKS REACH REMOTE AREAS OF BAGHLAN

In Baghlan, Northern Afghanistan the Department of Education and the Provincial Council recently accompanied USAID to deliver 190 desks to USAID funded schools. Representatives of the Department of Education and the elected provincial council representatives met with the schools' headmasters and other local elders. This occasion gave the high level officials an opportunity to travel to remote districts and stop at other local communities and the district governor's compound. The Field Program Officer at the Baghlan PRT plans to expand this relationship with other government officials as additional projects begin implementation in remote districts.



Photo: USAID/Monica McQueary

UPDATE ON ROAD CONSTRUCTION

Ring Road: Construction on the Japanese section (Section 1) of the Kandahar to Herat highway is progressing. Funds have been secured for the remaining 65km. Construction is slated for completion by end of 2008, as stipulated in the ANDS.

Provincial roads: 730km have been paved to date. The Panjshir Road has been completed, cutting travel time from Kabul to Panjshir by at least half. The Jalalabad- Asmar road was completed in April 2007.

Southern Strategy: Work continues on the Kandahar to Bikah (Section 1) road. To date, 17 kilometers have been constructed.



Photo: Simona Palenga, UNOPS

The Panjshir Road, completed in April 2007, has greatly reduced travel time from Kabul to Panjshir.

USAID LAUNCHES NEW PUBLICATION

Afghanistan Now provides a detailed description of USAID accomplishments in Afghanistan since 2002. Printed in Kabul, this new magazine was researched and written by Ben Barber and designed by Nan Dearborn in USAID/LPA.

Go to: http://www.usaid.gov/afghanistan/af_now_0107.html